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Mon, Sep 29, 2008

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Published: 09.15.2008

Sales-tax backers won't give up

The Associated Press

Backers of a failed initiative effort to raise the state sales tax to pay for state road construction projects and mass transit say they're not giving up, they're just taking another approach.

The TIME Coalition sought to place its tax-funded transportation plan before voters this fall, but fell short of the required number of signatures to qualify for the ballot.

Members of the Transportation & Infrastructure Moving AZ's Economy coalition say it will stay together and continue to aggressively pursue its goals by targeting lawmakers instead of voters.

Coalition officials said they will try to get the transportation plan passed by the Legislature next year. If that fails, the group is not ruling out another try at a ballot initiative.

David Martin, co-chairman of the TIME campaign and president of the Arizona chapter of the Associated General Contractors of America, said the contractors group will begin aggressively backing pro-transportation candidates for the Legislature and working to have those they regard as opponents defeated.

The state Department of Transportation estimates it will run out of money to build new roads outside



Maricopa and Pima counties in 2015.

TIME's transportation plan would have increased the state's sales tax by a penny per dollar over 30 years to finance roadways and mass transit across the state.

The idea didn't sit well with anti-tax legislators and economic-advocacy groups.

"We felt that this one was a bad deal for the taxpayers," said Steve Voeller, president of the Arizona Free Enterprise Club.

Another group talking transportation is Moving AZ One. It estimates the Phoenix metro region needs \$25 billion in transportation investment for a 20-year period.

Moving AZ One says it will seek public input on its initial conclusions before putting together its vision for the future by 2012.

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Comments on this Story

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1. *Comment by Derek H. (dhofmann) — September 14, 2008 @ 9:52PM*

Developer fees or some kind of user fee, not a sales tax, please.

2. *Comment by S G. (12009) — September 14, 2008 @ 10:58PM*

The cheap skates in the Old Pueblo will never back anything that isn't free!

We'll all be on grid-locked roads, trying to outwit redlight cams and there's nothing that will be done EVER for mass transit here!

3. *Comment by Glenn M. (GLM) — September 15, 2008 @ 10:54AM*

David Martin, co-chairman of the TIME campaign and president of the Arizona chapter of the Associated General Contractors of America, said the contractors group will begin aggressively backing pro-transportation candidates for the Legislature and working to have those they regard as opponents defeated. So in other words they are looking to line their pockets with tax dollars. Anytime there is a contractor involved, you can bet the public is getting screwed.

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